***Press* Release**

The Meteorological Office

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UK CLIMATE CHANGE EXPERT WINS IMO PRIZE

One of the pioneers of modern-day research into climate change and its impacts, receives the 'IMO (International Meteorological Organization) Prize for Outstanding Contribution to International Meteorlogy' at a ceremony in London tonight. Sir John Houghton, a former Chief Executive of The UK Met. Office, is only the fourth British meteorologist to win this prestigious prize in its 43-year history. It is awarded each year by the World Meteorological Organization, a specialised agency of the United Nations.

Sir John receives the prize for his lifetime contribution to meteorology, and in particular his work on climate change. This work was fundamental in helping shape international climate change policy in recent years, such as that formulated by politicians at the international climate conferences held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and Kyoto in 1997.

During his time at The Met. Office Sir John Houghton was instrumental in setting up the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research, which is now one of the world's leading climate change research sites. In collaboration with other leading international research scientists The Hadley Centre has contributed to the growing international research effort on climate change, along with its likely effect on the environment and the everyday lives of billions of people throughout the world

Sir John left The Met. Office in 1991, but since then has continued to play a leading role in his field. He is currently co-chairman of one of the key Working Groups of the International Panel on Climate Change, and Chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution. Previously he has been Vice President of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and Chairman of the Joint Scientific Committee on the Global Climate Observing System.

Leading scientists and civil servants from many parts of the world will gather at tonight's ceremony at the Royal Society, where Sir John will receive the award from WMO President Dr John Zillman. Dr Zillman will be accompanied by the Secretary-General of the WMO Professor Godwin O P Obasi.

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Notes:

- The International Meteorological Organization was an independent body set up in 1879, and disbanded in the late 1940s. It was the fore-runner of the current World Meteorological Organization, which is a specialised agency of the United Nations comprising 185 member states.
- Sir John Houghton was Director General, and latterly Chief Executive, of The Met. Office between 1983 and 1991.
- The Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research was opened in 1990.